

# Guard joins war on terror

Missions range from airport security to Operation 'Enduring Freedom' support

By Tim Donovan  
At Ease Staff

The Wisconsin National Guard was involved in our nation's response to Sept. 11 within minutes of the World Trade Center incident that signaled the attack's beginning.

After taking immediate steps to prevent any harm to Wisconsin Guard personnel and facilities, the Wisconsin National Guard prepared for its inevitable involvement in military operations.

Two military operations were established in response to Sept. 11: Operation NOBLE EAGLE, for homeland defense; and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, the war on terrorism overseas.

As At Ease went to press at the end of November, the Wisconsin National Guard had more than 650 members engaged on both fronts.

## Chronology

SEPT. 11: Attack on America began approximately 7:45 a.m. Central time.

The Wisconsin National Guard immediately increased level of security at all Army and Air Guard installations statewide.



The most visible Guard support could be seen at nine Wisconsin airports, where troops have supplemented security since Sept. 27. Pictured are members of the 32nd Military Police Company on duty outside Dane County Regional Airport in Madison.

Guard leaders consulted with Gov. Scott McCallum on security issues in Wisconsin related to the terrorist attacks.

SEPT. 12: Air crews and KC-135 aircraft from the 128th Air Refueling Wing flew three federal missions from the wing's base at Mitchell Field, Milwaukee. The

crews flew as volunteers to support Air Force-tasks homeland defense missions.

**"As commander-in-chief of the Wisconsin National Guard, I am proud that our state will make an important contribution..."**

— Gov. Scott McCallum

SEPT. 14: President Bush signed an executive order authorizing up to 50,000 members of the

Guard and reserve to be called up under a partial mobilization.

SEPT. 20: Members of the 128th Air Refueling Wing deployed to an undisclosed overseas location to support U.S. military operations.

Participating members of the 128th Air Refueling Wing were on active duty as volunteers and were not part of the partial mobilization.

SEPT. 27: Members of the 32nd Military Police Company, Milwaukee and Madison, were ordered to supplement airport security operations at seven Wisconsin airports.

The airport security mission was directed by Gov. Scott McCallum following President Bush's request to all the nation's governors to place Guard troops

at 422 airports nationwide.

The seven Wisconsin airports were General Mitchell International Airport in Milwaukee, Dane County Regional Airport in Madison, Austin Straubel Airport in Green Bay, Central Wisconsin Airport in Mosinee, La Crosse Municipal Airport, Outagamie County Regional Airport in Appleton, and Wittman Regional Airport in Oshkosh. The

airport security mission, expected to last up to six months, is performed under state control by authority of Title 32 U.S. Code.

OCT. 1: Approximately 50 members of the 128th Security Forces Squadron, Milwaukee, were ordered to active duty.

OCT. 4: Approximately 50 members of the 115th Security Forces Squadron, Madison, were ordered to active duty.

OCT. 7: U.S.-led air strikes against Al Qaeda terrorist camps and military targets of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan began at approximately 11:30 a.m. Central time.

Security at Wisconsin Army and Air National Guard installations was increased to Force Protection Condition Charlie shortly after air strikes began.

OCT. 8: Aircraft from the 115th Fighter Wing, Madison, conducted a mission for the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) following a request from the Federal Aviation Administration.

OCT. 13: Members of the 32nd Military Police Company who made the initial response to supplement airport security were relieved by troops from other Wisconsin National Guard units.

OCT. 17: Approximately 75 members of the 128th Air Refueling

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## at ease

Celebrating 24 years of service to members of the Wisconsin Army and Air National Guard and their families  
November 2001

## A simple gesture of appreciation

Americans have expressed their feelings about the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in many ways since the first chilling images filled our TV screens and our thoughts on that second Tuesday of September.

An entire nation mourned for the victims, most hoped for swift justice, and many others looked for military action against the people responsible for the attacks.

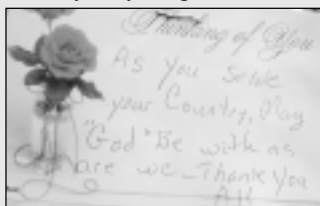
In Hayward, Wis., at least one person had another feeling to express.

Arriving at the Hayward ar-

mory one morning after the attacks, members of the 724th Engineer Battalion headquarters found a small bouquet of flowers leaning against the building.

Attached to the flowers was an anonymous note of support for the Guard soldiers who drill there and who represent the U.S. armed forces in this northern Wisconsin community.

The note told the Hayward soldiers that someone was thinking of them while they serve — and it ended with a simple "Thank you all."



This unsigned note was left at the Hayward armory.



A small bouquet of flowers, left at the Hayward armory, greeted soldiers of the 724th Engineer Battalion a few days following Sept. 11.



Members of the 128th Air Refueling Wing push a fuel cell into a KC-135 Stratotanker while serving at an undisclosed location in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Photo by Staff Sgt. Pamela Farlin.

## Adjutant general praises Guard's quick, effective response to Sept. 11

By Maj. Gen. James G. Blaney  
The Adjutant General

Like every American, I will never forget exactly what I was doing the morning of Sept. 11, when our nation was the target of an unbelievably evil series of attacks that ended more than 4,000 innocent lives, shocked the world, and attempted to destroy our way of life forever.

As American Airlines Flight 11 smashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center, it was 7:45 a.m. in Wisconsin and I was at St. Mary's Hospital in Madison, where I was scheduled to have knee surgery that morning. When a second airliner, this time United Flight 175, slammed into the WTC's south tower 21 minutes later it became apparent we were witnessing an unbelievable act of terrorism rather than a tragic accident.

Although I would rather have personally directed the Wisconsin Guard's response to the terrorist attacks over the next two weeks, I knew the Wisconsin Guard had two outstanding deputy adjutants general, a superb staff, experienced commanders — and nearly 10,000 of the finest men and women in Wisconsin.

I knew the state's National Guard was in good hands so I was not the least bit surprised as I watched how professionally and effectively the Guard performed in the first uncertain weeks that followed Sept. 11.

As I was wheeled into a hospital operating room,



Maj. Gen. Blaney

Brig. Gen. Al Wilkening was making the first of three visits to the Capitol that day to consult with Gov. McCallum.

The Guard was also taking fast action to protect our own personnel and facilities: within minutes of the second airliner's impact in lower Manhattan, all Wisconsin Guard armories and air bases were put on Threatcon (Threat Condition) Bravo; when the Pentagon was hit a half hour later security was increased to Threatcon Charlie; and by noon we had implemented our highest security level of Threatcon Delta.

And all across Wisconsin, men and women of the National Guard stood ready to do anything they were asked to do in response to the terrorist attack on America.

By the time I could return to my duties two weeks later the Wisconsin National Guard was involved: The 128th Air Refueling Wing supported military operations both at home and abroad, and the 115th Fighter Wing was supporting the North American Aerospace Defense Command.

More Guard involvement would follow and more still may be ahead.

As I think back to the events of Sept. 11, my thoughts fill with the same shock and horror all Americans experienced that terrible day. But my thoughts are also filled with pride in the men and women who serve in the Wisconsin National Guard and who always accomplish every mission that comes their way.



— Stephen J. Forsberg, *Army Times*

Calm down, America... your Guard is up.

Air Guard Contributors: Maj. Chris Rodel, Master Sgt. Larry Rush, Tech. Sgt. Wayne Rodriguez.

- **Monroe's 1158th Transportation Company** spent its annual training in West Germany, working directly with an active Army transportation company.

Overall, this Web site is a great ambassador for the U.S. Air Force.



# Tuition stays at 100 percent

## Top Guard benefit saved by governor, legislature

At Ease Staff

Gov. Scott McCallum answered the question of whether the Wisconsin National Guard's tuition grant program would be kept at 100 percent at a standing-room-only bill signing ceremony at the Guard state headquarters auditorium Nov. 29. The answer was "yes."

Although the tuition program's 100 percent level was included in McCallum's budget proposal, the Legislature's conference committee reduced tuition grants to 85 percent.

A McCallum line-item veto restored the grant to 100 percent, but funding was insufficient to pay for it until Assembly Bill 509 passed 98-0 in the Assembly and by a voice vote in the Senate. McCallum's signature was the final step in a process that Guard officials had been watching closely all year.

Maj. Gen. James G. Blaney, who worked closely with the governor and legislators to preserve the tuition program, said he was delighted with the outcome.

"I can't tell you how happy I am that Gov. McCallum and our Legislature made this important invest-

ment in our Guard members," Blaney said. "The tuition program is critical to our ability to attract and retain the best young men and women in Wisconsin."

Blaney noted that appropriating \$1.5 million needed to fund the tuition grant program from a tight state budget was especially difficult and was a strong showing of support for the Guard.

"Since September 11, we've quite rightly seen renewed appreciation and gratitude for all those who serve in the military and National Guard," McCallum said. "That appreciation is reflected in the bills I am proud to sign today."

Besides the tuition bill, Gov. McCallum signed four additional Guard-related bills into law:

■ Assembly Bill 558 designates military veterans of this current time period as Operation Enduring Freedom veterans, entitling families of these individuals to veterans benefits. The bill also entitles Guard members to extensions on professional or occupational licenses for 90 days following discharge from active duty, and allows them to either withdraw or complete course work at universities and technical colleges without paying additional tuition and fees.

■ Assembly Bill 560 eliminates the interest ordinarily due on payments from income tax returns filed under an extension by members of the armed forces who are participating in Operation Enduring Freedom.



Flanking Gov. McCallum as he signed five National Guard-related bills into law Nov. 29 were Maj. Gen. James Blaney, left, and Veterans Affairs Sec. Raymond G. Boland. Several legislators who sponsored the bills were also present for the ceremony. Shown standing behind McCallum are Rep. Sheryl Albers, Rep. Terry Musser and Sen. Rod Moen.

■ Assembly Bill 571 provides the same benefits to National Guard members called into service to the state as those benefits provided by federal law to individuals called into active duty. The benefits include placing a 6 percent interest rate cap on obligations incurred before entry into the armed forces and protection from eviction.

■ Assembly Bill 572 establishes re-employment rights to those

called into service. Under federal law, certain re-employment rights and benefits are provided to individuals who are absent from work because of service in the armed forces or National Guard. This bill covers individuals not included in the federal law.

"On behalf of the state of Wisconsin, let me thank you again for everything you are doing to protect citizens and preserve our free-

doms here in Wisconsin and throughout the United States," Gov. McCallum said. "This legislation will help ensure that you are never penalized for serving your country."

McCallum also signed bills designating April 9 as "Prisoners of War Remembrance Day," and adding one representative of the Wisconsin chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America to the Council on Veterans Programs.

# 147th Aviation deploys to Kuwait

By Steve Olson  
At Ease Staff

Wisconsin National Guard soldiers from 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation, switched from woodland green to sandy brown BDUs as they left Wisconsin for a one-year mission in an arid kingdom where temperatures typically exceed 115 degrees.

On July 26, the 147th began the first of four rotations, each lasting approximately 90 days, as part of Operation Desert Spring in Kuwait.

The Madison-based unit has 14 UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and about 250 soldiers. The battalion also has a company, with seven helicopters, that is part of the Indiana National Guard.

For the first rotation, from August through October, the 147th deployed approximately 20 Wisconsin soldiers and three aircraft while the Indiana company provided about 10 soldiers and one Black Hawk.

The 147th contingent is now part of an

aviation task force that includes a Utah Army National Guard unit, which flies AH-64 Apache attack helicopters.

The task force's mission is to demonstrate U.S. resolve in the Persian Gulf region, deter aggression, and if deterrence fails, defend Kuwait, according to Army Guard officials.

Preparation for the deployment started more than a year ago and included field training in the Utah desert.

With the Utah training and other realistic mission simulations under their belts, the departing 147th soldiers were quietly confident as they awaited their long flight on a C-5 Galaxy transport from Madison's Truax Field.

"We're pretty upbeat and anxious to get started," said Sgt. Johnny Simmons of West Bend, who is a 147th crew chief.

Understandably, his enthusiasm was tempered by the anticipation of a three-month-long separation from his family. Simmons said, "While I was on active duty, my wife got used to my being gone from home on deployments.

But this one is the first since our daughter was born, so it will be different."

His wife, Jill, remarked, "It won't be easy, but I'm sure we'll get through it OK. I just hope the time goes quickly for both of us."

Gov. Scott McCallum, addressing the deploying Guard troops, noted the importance of support on the home front: "I want

to acknowledge the important sacrifices this mobilization brings to your families and your employers. Without strong support from your families and employers, it simply would not be possible for the Guard to assume an important worldwide mission like this one. Thank you for standing behind the troops and supporting them while they serve."



ABOVE: One of four UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters from the 147th is loaded onto a C-5 Galaxy in July for the journey to Kuwait.

RIGHT: Sgt. Johnny Simmons, a 147th crew chief, and his wife, Jill, along with their two-year-old daughter, Jordan, get ready to tour a giant C-5 transport before the 147th's departure for Kuwait. Photos by Steve Olson.





# 632nd fires up M-1s for last time

By Keith Fenske  
At Ease Staff

It was a still, cool, dark early morning Aug. 17. Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 632nd Armor, packed their equipment and mounted their M-1IP main battle tanks for the last time.

The tankers made a night movement from their South Post assembly area at Fort McCoy to the crossing at Highway 21, a once common event — but this time would be their last ever.

The decommissioning of the armor battalion has created mixed reactions from its soldiers, many of whom are sad to see their tanks go away.

“You hold your breath, hoping it’s not going to happen,” said Sgt. Robert Johnson of Headquarters Company. “Now that the decision has been made, we have to move on with our lives and learn a new trade.”

The armored vehicles and their crews assembled in the cantonment area to turn in their basic individual issue equipment and

clean the gun tubes. Then came the final journey to the vehicle wash racks before the tanks were handed over to the Guard’s maintenance facility.

“It’s one thing to carry your weapon into battle, but as a tanker, your weapon carries you,” said Spc. Andrew Marvin of Company A. “You had a secure environment to operate and fight from. The way a tanker sees things, if you are walking, you are in a world of hurt.”

There is a special sense of pride among the tankers, many of whom would travel great distances on drill weekends for the privilege of being a member of an armor unit.

“We have soldiers that would drive more than three hours to get to drill,” said Sgt. Bill Frederick, also of Company A. “They did this because they had a unique opportunity — to work with tanks. It’s unlike any other job in the Army.”

“You can never do a job like this in the civilian world,” said Marvin. “I’ve been a tanker for more than nine years and can’t think of another Army position

that could have been more rewarding. I’m going to miss it.”

It has been known for quite some time that this day would come — a day when they would shed their armor and take on a whole new mission. For the Merrill-based Company A, the transition will take the unit back to its beginnings.

“Our unit will become Troop E, 105th Cavalry,” said 1st Sgt. Greg Smith, the unit’s top sergeant. “The Merrill unit was originally a cavalry unit 100 years ago. Of course, back then, the troops rode horses. But it is interesting how history swings full-circle after 100 years,” he added.

“The switch to cavalry will also provide many educational

opportunities for our soldiers,” said Smith. “Learning our new mission will keep our soldiers motivated and allow them to function as the tightly-knit unit that they currently are.

“One of the downfalls of being an armor unit was that we spent a lot of travel time to Fort McCoy for our training. As a cavalry unit, we can do less traveling and more training right at our home station. That fact alone will save us countless hours of valuable drill time.”

For Frederick, the cavalry and armor missions go hand-in-hand. “We are very lucky to be going cavalry,” he said. “Cavalry and armor are like brother and sister. We’ll be performing

some high-speed missions with our new unit. We are the ones who go out and scout the enemy. It will be great to begin our new unit training.”

Although the soldiers of Company A have a whole new mission awaiting them, they will never forget the thrill of being tankers.

“We all loved our tanks. There is no other weapon like it,” said Smith. “When we move, the earth shakes. Our presence scares the heck out of the enemy. In parades, people would point to us and take our pictures. We generated a lot of curiosity and excitement because our tanks are such an awesome and dominating piece of weaponry.”

## State News Briefs

### Wisconsin veterans can get 6.8 percent home mortgage loans

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) now has \$24.9 million available for home mortgage loans with an interest rate of 6.8 percent, WDVA Secretary Raymond G. Boland said.

In addition to the low interest rate, WDVA home mortgage loans offer several advantages to Wisconsin veterans, such as no discount points, no funding fee, no requirement for private mortgage insurance, and a fixed rate of interest for the 30-year term.

“The monthly payments on a WDVA home loan may be substantially lower than a conventional loan. Beside the attractive interest rate, there is no requirement for mortgage insurance, which is a significant savings,” Boland said.

The loan must be used to buy or build the veteran’s principal residence. It may not be used to refinance an existing mortgage. WDVA requires at least a 5 percent down payment.

WDVA home mortgage loans no longer have maximum income limits, so higher income veterans may qualify. However, the amount of the WDVA home mortgage loan may not exceed \$278,750.

WDVA also offers home improvements loans with a 7.45 percent interest rate. Veterans may borrow up to \$25,000 with 15 years to repay for a variety of alterations, construction and repairs of their principal residence, including garage construction. Veterans now may have more than one WDVA home improvement loan if they have sufficient equity and can repay multiple loans.

To obtain WDVA home loans, veterans must meet military service and state residency requirements set by the Wisconsin Legislature.

“WDVA home loans are funded through the sale of general obligation bonds,” Boland said. “Unfortunately, the state was set to sell the bonds for the home loan program on Sept. 11, the day that terrorists struck and shut down financial markets in New York. The state was not able to set up another sale until Sept. 28. However, WDVA now has the funds required to continue to provide home loans.”

For more information about WDVA home mortgage and home improvement loans, contact a county veterans service office. More information is also available on the WDVA Web site at <http://dva.state.wi.us>.

### Retirees can choose to end state tax withholding on pensions

The state biennial budget, signed recently by Gov. Scott McCallum, exempts military retirement pay from state income taxes beginning January 2002. This exemption will provide more than \$8 million in savings to military retirees and surviving spouses in Wisconsin. As a result of the new exemption, veterans and surviving spouses who receive military retirement pensions may decide to end the state tax withholding on their monthly checks beginning in 2002.

Those who wish to end the withholding of state taxes from their retirement pay should contact one of the following agencies:

Retired members of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force (active and reserve components): Phone, fax or write no later than Nov. 15, 2001. Include your name, Social Security number, and a request to stop state withholding effective January 2002.

Defense Finance and Accounting Service-Cleveland/ROCAD  
P.O. Box 99191  
Cleveland, OH 44199  
Toll free: 1-800-321-1080 or Fax: 1-800-469-6559



Sgt. Bill Frederick, a tank gunner for Company A, 1st Battalion, 632nd Armor, receives orders from his tank commander before the unit’s final crossing of Highway 21 on August 17th.

## Green Bay airport security guard saves toddler’s life

By Larry Sommers  
At Ease Staff

A Wisconsin Army National Guard member on security duty at Austin Straubel International Airport in Green Bay saved a toddler from choking on a piece of candy.

Sgt. Brent W. Voelker, Bonduel, a member of the Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, was in conversation with an elderly couple when Trisha Ellis, Iron Mountain, Mich., called for his help, according to a statement given to the Brown County Sheriff’s Department.

Ellis’ daughter Ashlin, approximately two years old, was struggling for breath and beginning to turn blue. At first her airway was only partly obstructed, said Voelker, but after trying to get the child to cough up the obstruction, her airway closed completely.

“I then picked her up,” Voelker reported, “cupped her chin with my left hand and administered four back blows and four chest thrusts. I then checked inside the infant’s mouth and saw nothing. I continued this cycle three more times.



Sgt. Brent Voelker patrols Austin Straubel International Airport in Green Bay on security duty. He is credited with saving the life of a toddler choking on a piece of candy. Photo by Julie Friedman.

“After the fourth cycle, upon observing the mouth I saw a piece of candy.” Voelker then dislodged the candy with his finger.

The mother, Trisha Ellis, thanked Voelker for saving

Ashlin’s life.

Voelker was awarded the Wisconsin Commendation Medal by Gov. McCallum Oct. 28 at an Armed Forces Salute in Wausau.



# Engineers prepare to aid Nicaragua in 2002

By Bob Giblin  
At Ease Staff

While a military buildup to wage war against terrorism dominates much of the nation's thoughts, words and deeds, the Wisconsin Army National Guard is leading another effort — one focused on peace, friendship and nation-building.

Wisconsin Guard combat engineers are spearheading a joint task force that will build or repair schools and clinics, install water wells, and provide medical and veterinary care, in rural Nicaragua. The operation will involve more than 41 military units from 20 states and will draw from both active and reserve components of the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines, as well as Nicaraguan military forces.

Joint Task Force Chontales, named for the Nicaraguan department — or region — where the operation will take place, has been in the intensive planning and preparation stage since January 2001. However, the operation is part of a series of exercises, under the New Horizons program, that have been providing humanitarian and civic assistance to Central and South America for several years.

"While the people of Nicaragua benefit from the engineering

projects and medical care, the operation provides the military with critical mobilization, deployment and joint readiness training," says Lt. Col. Patrick Gallagher, the Wisconsin Army National Guard combat engineer commanding the task force.

This exercise is especially challenging, he says, because of the tremendous logistical issues involved. The exercise involves nine two-week rotations, each with as many as 650 military personnel. In addition, military equipment and supplies will move by rail from Fort McCoy and other locations to U.S. sea ports for shipping to Nicaragua. From the receiving port in Nicaragua, equipment and supplies will be transported by barges up-river, deep into Nicaragua.

The exercise kicks off in January 2002. Early-arriving soldiers will conduct port operations, establish a base camp and begin rebuilding or reinforcing roads leading to the project sites.

Engineering projects to be completed between January and May include:

- La Gateada Clinic: Build three clinics.
- El Coral Clinic: Build two clinics.
- Los Canales School: Build a new two-room school.



An advance team inspects a clinic site at Rancho Alegre, Nicaragua. Wisconsin Army National Guard photo.

- Rancho Alegre School: Build a new two-room school adjacent to an existing school.
- Los Millones School: Renovate an existing two-room school and build a new two-room school.
- Muhan Clinic: Build a new clinic adjacent to an existing clinic.
- Quinama School: Build a new two-room school.
- Sebaco: Building repairs and upgrades (three locations).

Many of the projects also will require construction or rehabilitation of access roads, drilling new wells and building new latrines.

In addition to the engineering projects, medical and dental personnel will treat up to 500 patients per day.

Gallagher says that so far, the experience has been fast paced, exciting and very interesting. "Our full-time staff has been working

very hard. This has involved a lot of coordination with our STARC Wisconsin staff, FORSCOM (United States Army Forces Command), 1st Army, U.S. Army South, U.S. Army Southern Command, the National Guard Bureau, the host nation, and all branches of the service. It has been a tremendous learning experience for me personally and for all of the members of the task force planning staff."

# Volk Field trains active-duty unit for humanitarian response assignment

Maj. Bryan Spalla  
Volk Field

Kosovo was probably beautiful once, but does anyone remember when?

All major buildings and facilities have structural damage. Electrical service, once intermittent, is now almost nonexistent, and no one can say when it will be restored. Ruptured water and sewage lines have contaminated all drinking water, and pestilence from the unsanitary conditions could reach biblical proportions. Authorities at the airport have abandoned all operations until a full-scale operational reassessment can be made. Residents have fled, some banding together in the surrounding countryside and others going south to cross into Macedonia and Albania. It is a society disrupted by warring factions, murder, theft, and constant minor incidents of violence against people and prop-

erty.

This real-world situation became the basis for an April deployment of the 22nd Air Refueling Wing, McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas, to Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center (CRTC). The Kansas unit immersed itself in Operation Swift Response, a six-day Air Mobility Command Humanitarian Assistance Response Training (HUMRO) exercise.

"This was the first HUMRO exercise conducted where the participants were exposed to the hazards and problems that will occur when deploying to devastated areas," said Lt. Col. Terry Meissner, chief of contingency plans and operations. "We were pleased to assist Air Mobility Command in designing and executing this exercise."

The unit was introduced to HUMRO in January 2000, when it became one of five active-duty units tasked to stand by for humani-

tarian assistance missions for a set three-month period. The unit decided to enlist the expertise of the Readiness Safeguard instructor cadre at Volk Field.

Tailoring exercises to closely mimic real deployment situations is what cadre members do best. They produced a coordinated, written exercise plan designed to task the unit with several real-world scenarios. The plan included a site survey, advance party arrival, unit deployment, force bed-down, command and control set-up, establishing perimeter defense and internal security, providing just-in-time training, and conducting daily operations for an undetermined length of time.

Members of the wing arrived at Volk Field ready to perform and were immediately tested by the training plan. Some of the scenarios in the plan: A local airport official arrives and wants to know why the unit is on his field. An orphanage contacts the deployed commander with a request for supplies for refugees. Numerous downed trees block any passage on roads, immediately tasking unit civil engineers. A number of civilians are shot at a local village and a



Security Forces protect and secure the area surrounding a truck explosion during a HUMRO exercise conducted by Volk Field CRTC. Photo by Master Sgt. Neal Hoffoss.

team is sent to provide aid. Parasite exposure causes a minor epidemic. Vandals break into the compound and try to steal a number of items. Finance and contracting receive more requests than they have funds for. Military members exhibit stress-related symptoms. On a trip to purchase goods, a contractor is overtaken and robbed. And the list goes on.

Training for the 22nd Air Refu-

eling Wing was compressed and intense. The exercise required extensive research and coordination in the preparation phase and attention to detail in the execution.

"The Volk cadre did an outstanding job presenting us with extremely realistic events that are likely to happen when we deploy," said Col. Mark Anderson, commander of the 22nd Air Refueling Wing's Volk Field deployment.



"Protestors" are taken into custody by Security Forces during a HUMRO exercise conducted by Volk Field CRTC. Photo by Master Sgt. Neal Hoffoss.

# Terrorism

Continued from Page 1

Wing, Milwaukee, were ordered to active duty to continue the unit's support of military operations begun on a volunteer status Sept. 20.

Oct. 19: About 30 members of 128th Air Refueling Wing, Milwaukee, returned from a deployed location where they had been supporting Operation ENDURING FREEDOM since Sept. 20.

Oct. 24: Members of the 128th Air Control Squadron began setting up a mobile radar site in McHenry County, Ill.

Oct. 30: The Department of Defense announced that 73 members of the 115th Fighter Wing had been called up under the partial mobilization. The wing, which is supporting Operation NOBLE EAGLE homeland defense operations, already had a significant number of its personnel on active duty as volunteers.

Nov. 8: The Department of Defense announced that 12 members of the 829th Engineer Detachment, Richland Center, had been

called up under the partial mobilization. Unit members were active duty the same day. They would eventually deploy to an undisclosed location in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

Nov. 21: Two Wisconsin airports, in Eau Claire and Rhinelander, were added by the FAA to receive security from the National Guard. The Guard presence at nine airports was ordered expanded by 25 percent through the holidays.



# 229th engineers reshape Wisconsin terrain

Story and photos by  
Steve Olson  
At Ease staff

Whether it's halfway around the world or just the other end of the state, if there's a need to dig, haul, grade and level massive amounts of earth, the 229th Engineer Company continually proves it can handle the mission.

During this year's annual training in June, the 229th, from Platteville and Prairie du Chien, built a runway extension for a small airport in the Jefferson County community of Palmyra. The engineers also constructed three gravel parking lots and an access road in the Kettle Moraine State Forest, near Eagle, at the request of the Department of Natural Resources.

Despite heavy rains in early June, the engineers did their best to plow through the resulting mud with their dozers, graders, scrapers and dump trucks.

Although the wet weather did not hamper their work, it did lead to one particularly long and sleepless night. On the evening of June 11, a severe storm that wreaked havoc in Oshkosh and other areas of the state whipped

through the 229th's field site and brought the unit to the brink of evacuation.

"Our severe weather plan calls for everyone to grab their weapon and immediately get on the deuce-and-a-halves, so we can move them to the local high school," said 1st Lt. Robert Pruitt, commander of the Platteville detachment and company executive officer.

Fortunately, the storm subsided with no damage to the camp.

"I've got to hand it to our maintenance section," said Sgt. 1st Class Richard Stelpflug. "They had the trucks ready to go and in place just in case."

The 229th's camp — next to the local graveyard — did not go unnoticed by the residents of the area. The engineers and their construction projects were front-page news in the local papers.

In addition to their construction projects, the engineers got a chance to practice combat maneuvers. On June 9, before more than 100 spectators, including soldiers' family members, they staged a simulated assault, with 229th soldiers on the attack against fellow unit



Sgt. Anthony Farmer, left, and Spc. John Schwanbeck repair a telescoping light pole at the 229th's field site next to the Palmyra airport. Farmer is a physical education teacher at Dodgeville High School and Schwanbeck is a sheet metal worker from Baraboo.



A bulldozer and scraper from the 229th Engineer Company of Prairie du Chien and Platteville build a gravel parking lot in the Kettle Moraine State Forest near Eagle.



Spc. Tony Steinhart positions the laser surveying system rod during the Kettle Moraine project. Steinhart is a UW-Platteville student and lives in Platteville.

members in defensive fighting positions.

Along with the combat exercise, the construction experience gained in this year's annual training projects increased the unit's proficiency in its mission-essential task list (METL). The 229th is part of the Force Support Package (FSP), which means it has to be able to deploy anywhere in the world on short notice. As a result, all training opportunities are critically important. "Our mission is to open and construct combat roads and trails, so these projects are definitely in line with our METL," said Pruitt.

Of course, the unit's projects also greatly benefited the local communities. Palmyra Airport Manager Don Agen said, "These guys are doing a great job. We couldn't have done the runway expansion without the Guard."

Last year, the 229th built roads along the border between California and Mexico for the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Next year, it will participate in a large humanitarian-aid project in Nicaragua called Task Force Chontales involving many Wisconsin Guard engineer units.

So it's no exaggeration to say that — in state, out of state, at home or abroad — the services of the 229th are in demand all around the world.



Guard engineers from the 229th fix a lightpole used to illuminate construction sites.



Spc. Phil Budden of the 229th compacts soil with a "vibe-roller" as part of the Kettle Moraine project. Budden lives in Platteville.



# Q's and A's of black berets

As the U.S. Army transforms itself to meet the challenges of the 21st century, it has adopted the black beret as official headgear for all soldiers. How does this affect the soldiers of the Wisconsin Army National Guard?

*The At Ease staff, working from a number of sources, pulled together the information most Wisconsin Army Guard members need to know about this prominent uniform change. Findings are presented below, in question-and-answer format.*

■ ■ ■ ■

**Q: When will the black beret become official wear for the Wisconsin Army National Guard?**

A: It already has. The Wisconsin Army National Guard transitioned to the black beret on Sept. 1, 2001, according to an August 18 memorandum from Brig. Gen. Kerry G. Denson, deputy adjutant general for Army.

**Q: How should the beret be worn?**

A: According to the memo, "The beret is worn so that the headband (edge binding) is straight across the forehead, 1 inch above the eyebrows. No hair may be visible on the forehead beneath the headband. The flash is positioned over the left eye, and the excess material is draped over to the right ear, to at least the top of the ear, and no lower than the middle of the ear. Personnel will cut off

the ends of the adjusting ribbon and secure the ribbon knot inside the edge binding at the back of the beret. When worn properly, the beret is form fitting to the head; therefore, soldiers may not wear hairstyles that cause distortion of the beret."

"It takes a little bit of forming to make sure the beret is level on the head," noted Command Sgt. Maj. John Hauschildt, senior enlisted advisor for the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

**Q: How is insignia to be worn on the beret?**

A: "Officers and warrant officers wear non-subdued grade insignia centered on the beret flash," said the Denson memo, "and chaplains wear their branch insignia. Enlisted personnel wear their distinctive unit insignia (DUI) centered on the beret flash."

**Q: How should the beret be cared for?**

A: Berets may be dry-cleaned only, according to Hauschildt. It should not be laundered in a regular washing machine, primarily because its wool fabric is subject to shrinkage.

**Q: What other uniform headgear is prescribed, and on what occasions?**

A: "The Patrol cap (formerly called the BDU cap) is worn with the BDU in field environments and on deployments when the Kevlar helmet is not worn; on work details; or when the commander determines that the wear of the beret is impractical," Denson directed in

his Aug. 18 memo.

"When soldiers perform activities where the beret would become soiled, damaged, or where it is just not appropriate, the commander of the unit can direct wear of the BDU cap," said Master Sgt. Kittie Messman, Army uniform policy officer, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, according to a July 6 article from the Army News Service.

Commanders of major commands and separate units will establish local policy for wear of the beret during weekend and annual training periods, and the state surface maintenance manager and director of aviation will make the same decisions for employees in their maintenance shops, according to the Denson memo.

The patrol cap will also be worn by "personnel in initial training categories who are not issued or who do not wear the black beret." The same categories of soldiers will wear the garrison cap with the Class A and B uniforms.

The service or "saucer" cap appears to be a thing of the past — except that, as noted in the July 6 article, "blue and white service caps will still be worn with the dress blues and white uniforms respectively."

**Q: Anything else to keep in mind?**

A: Yes: "Only those personnel authorized to wear the tan, green, and maroon berets, or those

assigned to Air Assault coded positions, are authorized to wear bloused boots with the class A and B uniforms." (Denson Aug. 18 memo.)

**Q: How are Wisconsin Guard members adjusting?**

A: "A lot of the Wisconsin Army National Guard soldiers I've talked to like the new black berets," said Hauschildt. "Our soldiers take a lot of pride in wearing the Army uniform, and they want to look good in it."



Command Sgt. Major John Hauschildt adjusts Sgt. Keith Fenske's beret. Photo by Tom Michele.

## Wisconsin salutes American spirit at September ceremony



Members of Wisconsin's military marched toward the State Capital grounds Sept. 16 for the "Wisconsin Salute to America's Spirit" ceremony. Members of the armed forces, fire fighters and police officers were among those honored by Gov. McCallum and other state officials. Photo by Spc. Carl Hackbarth.

## West Bend medevac unit spends AT on ground

*Story and photos by Steve Olson  
At Ease Staff*

The UH-1 Huey helicopter pilots, crew chiefs and flight medics in the 832nd Medical Company (Air Ambulance) operated at an unfamiliar altitude during annual training —namely, ground level.

Typically during annual training, the 832nd, of West Bend, flies air ambulance missions supporting the troops training at Fort McCoy and other locations. This year's annual training, however, was not typical.

Before the unit's annual train-

ing period, the Army grounded Huey helicopters with masts that exceeded 400 flying hours since new. Cracks had been detected in some Huey masts, which connect

the transmission with the rotor blades. Obtaining new masts normally would not be a problem. The Army, however, is replacing its aging Hueys with UH-60 Black Hawks. As a result, new Huey masts are hard to obtain from the manufacturer.

The air ambulance company had only one Huey mast available during annual training that did not exceed the specified flying hours, according to 1st

Lt. Jill Hjelmsand, an 832nd pilot.

The 832nd's one operable Huey was a workhorse for both daytime and night-vision goggle flight training by the aviators. For the unit's maintenance section training, a grounded Huey was transported to Fort McCoy, Hjelmsand said.

The lack of helicopters did not deter the 832nd, which seized the opportunity to train its soldiers in an array of field operations in addition to weapons qualifications and other tasks.

"We're keeping everyone very busy, and no one is complaining about being bored," Hjelmsand said.

With this year's annual training experience, the next time the 832nd helicopter crews soar over Fort McCoy, they'll know exactly what's down there.



Jill Hjelmsand



ROTC Cadet Bill Kalich of the 832nd Medical Company guards the unit's tactical operations center during annual training at Fort McCoy in June. Kalich is a former active-duty Army medic with the 10th Mountain Division.



# Realistic armor battle caps 632nd’s final summer

By Jim Wagner  
At Ease Staff

Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 632nd Armor, scrimmaged in an armor-on-armor match at Fort McCoy during their August annual training.

For the first time, the unit was able to train with anti-tank and artillery units in a joint training exercise. Tank crews fought in two consecutive combat missions to test their skills on the battlefield.

Rainy weather was a good omen for the tank battles. For the first time since annual training began, tank commanders didn’t have to worry about a 100-foot-tall plume of dust giving away their position. Now, with a good coating of rain packing down the dust and making visibility easier, attacking tankers could focus on stealth to move forward under concealment.

The scenario pitted advancing armored aggressors against armor and anti-armor elements defending a location.

“Our objective was to attack the defenders’ position and overtake them, then to secure the area,” said Sgt. Gene Engebretson, an armor crewman from Company A.

As a steady drizzle came down, smoke-filled artillery shells exploded on either side of the battlefield to cover the flanking movements of M-1 tanks.

Attackers were the first to suffer “losses” in the battle: simulated TOW (Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided) missile attacks by anti-tank elements on the south flank of the field took out maneuvering attackers. But defender casualties mounted when a simulated artillery shell took out two tank crews who failed to button down their hatches.

From there, the fierce scrimmage came down to a battle of inches. After laying down concealing smoke, the aggressor forces used TOW missiles to destroy anti-armor elements of the defense hidden in the tall pines on the right side of the field.

This, in turn, allowed the tanks to advance on the south flank, through a series of leapfrog movements.

Meanwhile, a strong push up the north flank put the aggressors closer to their objective. The move came at a price, as first one, then the other, of two M-1IP tanks providing cover from the center were picked off by TOW-firing defenders. The flanking moves, however, allowed the aggressors to seize the objective.

The second mission was even better for the aggressors. Normally, an attacking force is at the mercy of a better-entrenched defensive force. A combination of superior firepower and more experience, soldiers said, was the reason the second mis-

sion went so well. “The first mission went pretty well, even though we lost half of our people,” Engebretson said.

“That first time around, it came to a lack of communication, as we coordinated movements with different elements in the battle. But that’s what training is for — working out the kinks in operations like this. In the next battle, we got through without losing anyone.”

Capt. Shaun Mistlebauer, Commander of Company A, says the missions executed

were a rarity for anyone training in the Army National Guard, and one that soldiers should relish.

Funding problems and issues of armored mobility have kept the 632nd from participating in a joint arms exercise like this since the unit first got its M-1s.

“When you take a situation like the one we had today and put it together, it’s really amazing when you pull it off,” said Mistlebauer. “It’s a credit to the soldiers of the Army National Guard that they could put it together and make it work so well.”



After a series of challenging missions in the field, soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 632nd Armor clean their M-1 tanks for the last time.



On the offensive, an M-1 heads into battle near Fort McCoy’s Badger Drop Zone.



A parting shot in one of the 1st Battalion, 632nd Armor’s final tank-on-tank scrimmages, an M-1 fires through concealing smoke.

## Heave-ho!



Children of Wisconsin National Guard members take part in a tug-of-war at this year’s Youth Camp, held June 29 through July 1 at Fort McCoy. The camp is for children between the ages of 8 and 17. Other activities included a compass course, rappelling, river crossing via rope bridge, tie-dyeing, volleyball, swimming, dancing, and confidence and ropes courses. Children learn teambuilding, respect and discipline and build friendships with fellow campers. Wisconsin National Guard Family Program photo.



Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 632nd Armor, furl the unit’s colors prior to casing them during its deactivation ceremony at Fort McCoy Aug. 23. The tank battalion, a mainstay of the 32nd Infantry Brigade since 1971, was equipped with M-60A3 and later with M-1 tanks. In the brigade’s reorganization as a separate light infantry brigade, heavy armor is not needed. A light reconnaissance unit, Troop E, 105th Cavalry, is being reactivated in Merrill and Antigo, two of the former armored unit’s cities. The other three 632nd Armor cities — Wausau, Mosinee and Marinette — will host the brigade headquarters detachment, an artillery headquarters battery detachment, and a company of the 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, respectively. Photo by Jim Wagner.



# Litening II targeting system zeroes in on bomb strikes for 115th Fighter Wing

*By Master Sgt. Larry Rush  
115th Fighter Wing*

Madison’s F-16s are now more accurate and deadly than ever, thanks to a new electronic targeting system, the Litening II. According to its manufacturer, Northrop Grumman Corporation, “The Litening II combines night and day targeting and navigation capabilities in a single, low-cost, high-performance pod. It enables the F-16 to detect and identify ground targets for extremely accurate delivery of both conventional and precision guided weapons.” (Quoted from company Web site.) Accuracy in bombing a target is one of the primary aims of a pilot, and precision bombing technology has been around for a while. The Israeli Air Force has successfully used such systems for years. Israel’s tight air space and unique

geographical-political issues challenge the skills of their pilots, who are required to drop bombs only in hostile areas. Electronic/laser sensor systems placed on their aircraft have helped them to concentrate munitions on small targets, with minimum risk to innocent lives. The 115th Fighter Wing began receiving the Litening II system in August. It features a sensor pod placed on the right front side of the F-16. The sensor’s job is to provide reliable target acquisition and tracking for air-to-ground day or night strikes. Northrop Grumman advertises the system as easy to install and maintain, with a good pipeline of manufacturer support. “It will definitely help the pilots get bombs to the target,” said 2nd Lt. Bart VanRoo, 176th Fighter Squadron pilot, “and this targeting system is less risky to the pilot and aircraft.”



The Litening II targeting pod from Northrop Grumman Corporation is installed snugly along the belly of a 115th Fighter Wing F-16. Wisconsin Air National Guard photo by Randy Kostroski.

# Tankers go afoot on light infantry course

*By Jim Wagner  
At Ease Staff*

There are some things you just don’t expect to see together in this world: Refrigerators in the Arctic, snow in Brazil, rain in the Sahara desert. But tank crews participating in a light infantry conditioning course? That’s exactly what tankers from Company D, 1st Battalion, 632nd Armor, did — tackling the many obstacles designed to test the skill, coordination and determination of infantry soldiers training at Fort McCoy. The tankers approached the course with a healthy dose of good-natured teasing and encouragement. For many, the last obstacle course they’d seen was at basic training years ago. “I’m too out of shape for this kind of stuff; the last time I did any of this I was 19,” said Cpl. Mike Altman, a tank gunner in Delta Company and a loss prevention specialist at Shopko in his home town of River Falls. “But it’s a good challenge.” The “Weaver,” an obstacle that calls for soldiers to wend over and under an incline of planks, proved especially challenging. Making and repeating such movements, said Altman, is not high on the tanker’s priority

list. Crews are more concerned about developing arm strength to load the heavy shells found in most tanks, he said. Sending the company to the infantry confidence course was intended as a morale-booster and motivator now that the unit no longer has an armor mission. Delta Company’s last days as a tank unit were during the two-week annual training exercise in August. After washing and turning in their Abrams tanks at the end of annual training, crews were to cross-train into other military occupational specialties. Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Charneski, a Stevens Point native who works at the Army National Guard Organizational Maintenance Shop 13, said activities like the confidence course, planned for the last days of annual training, are a “last hurrah” to say goodbye to the unit they’ve trained in for years. “There’s a lot of disheartenment that the 632nd is going away,” Charneski said. “Many of us have been together for years. This is something fun for everybody to do together, even though we’re going to take it easy because we’re taking our Army Physical Fitness Test on the last day of annual training.”



Pfcs. Craig Manecke, left, and Jason Seubert, tankers with Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 632nd Armor in Mosinee, take time out from training exercises at Fort McCoy to run through the light infantry conditioning course. Both Edgar, Wis., natives, Manecke, a construction worker at Manecke Construction, and Seubert, who is a grounds maintenance worker at North Central Health Care, took part in two weeks of training exercises designed to improve their unit’s effectiveness under combat conditions.

# Training the trainers: instructors gear up for DL

*Story and Photos by  
Kelly Pensinger  
At Ease Staff*



Master Sgt. Gregory Wendt and Sgt. 1st Class Michael Perl demonstrate push-ups live on camera at the Wisconsin Military Academy’s Distance Learning classroom.

Learning field artillery skills on a TV screen? Is this the newest Nintendo game? No, this is the latest Distance Learning (DL) course, soon to be offered to soldiers in the Wisconsin National Guard. Last July, a handful of Wisconsin Military Academy (WMA) instructors came together for a week-

long “train-the-trainer” session. They had already completed the training course to become accredited instructors and were now learning to use the DL equipment at WMA. The soldiers learned how to demonstrate skills and procedures on camera, as well as controlling and reading Powerpoint presentations. “We have a lot of interaction and everyone is very enthused,” said Randy Williams, a DL instruc-

tor from Fort Sill, Okla. Williams monitored the WMA cadre and tested their skills on the last day. “Distance Learning will save the Army a lot of money,” said Master Sgt. Gregory Wendt, a WMA and member of the 1st Battalion, 126th Field Artillery. “It won’t work on all classes, but some.” WMA will soon begin using the DL technology to teach its field artillery courses.



Sgt. 1st Class William Reins (seated) gets computer assistance from Staff Sgt. Jerald Zahn. Both participated in Distance Learning training at the Wisconsin Military Academy.





“Cavalry officers on steaming mounts... appeared... on a dozen roads far from anything significant... muttering over and over, ‘Where the hell are we?’” A troop of mounted infantrymen patrols a dirt road near a rural gas station, potent symbol of the coming age of mechanization. Photos courtesy of the Wisconsin National Guard Museum.



Swooping like a hussar of old, a Wisconsin horse soldier at full gallop discharges his pistol on a silhouette target at Fort McCoy.



Two Army mules provide solid transportation for a Signal Corps sergeant and his wood-coffined radio gear.

# THE WAY WE W

## Axis threat looms over

By Tom Doherty  
At Ease Staff Historian

In August 1940, while British and German fighters were maneuvering each other into the English Channel and the Home Guard was digging in on the East Anglian peninsula to await the German invasion, a quarter-million National Guardsmen were gathered at camps across the United States, wiping the sleep from their eyes, waking up to a taste of mid-20th Century warfare.

In Wisconsin, the first two weeks of the 2nd Army maneuvers served as a prelude to the Battle of Wisconsin, a massive showdown between two armies of 30,000 men each.

In theory, the Reds — under Wisconsin’s Gen. Fish — were moving out of Iowa to defend against the aggressor Blues. The Blues, in theory, were attacking northwest from their staging area near Milwaukee.

In fact, however, the maneuvering was confined to a north-south line destined to shimmy back and forth over much of central Wisconsin, including virtually the whole of four counties: Juneau, Wood, Jackson and Monroe.

A thousand square miles.

The decisive factor was rain. A solid week of rain.

### A gathering of eagles

On Tuesday, August 20, 1940, passengers aboard the riverboat Blackhawk, headed down the Mississippi to Prairie du Chien, puzzled over the antics of Army Air Corps pilots who peeled their bombers out of formation and swooped down one by one, coming low over the

water and thundering overhead. They took no comfort from the realization that their boat had become an impromptu target.

Planes were gathering from all points, heavy B-17s from California and Louisiana, lighter B-18s and C-34s from Washington and New York, nearly two dozen P-36 pursuit planes from all over. For three days, V-shaped formations circled over Madison as the Air Corps assembled at the municipal airport.

Newspapers treated the airmen like movie stars. The East High gymnasium, where they were billeted, took on the glamour of Beverly Hills. The papers detailed their hobbies, hometowns, daily routines, even the menus at the cafeteria. It was a great coup for the Air Corps recruiting program, then in hot competition with the Navy and Marines.

The VFW expected to make a killing from its parking concession at the airport, where 40,000 spectators were expected next weekend.

The problem was the rain. It had started about the time the bombers roared over the riverboat, and it continued throughout the first few days of maneuver and probe along the front. It continued throughout the night that infantrymen of the 128th Regiment were pulled from the line and sent on a long looping train ride over the Mississippi and back.

That weekend the VFW men staffing the parking concession in Madison found themselves virtually alone in a vast wet field. A few flights made it to the battle zone both days, but the massed waves of aircraft that the schedule called for never materialized. Rain and fog had grounded the Air Corps.

In Rock County, bridges were washed out. Across the state, vegetables rotted on the vine. Heavy corn stalks were about to collapse in the soupy ground.

Still, Red and Blue ground forces continued to slug it out, each side seeking an opening for a killer blow.

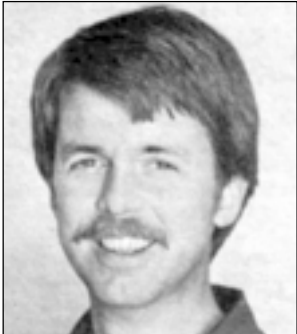
At the northern tip of the maneuver area, the 5th Regular Army Division and elements of the 32nd and 33rd Guard divisions were coiled for a massive, armor-tipped assault that would slice southeastward, severing the Blue’s advance forces from the main body.

Meanwhile, Blue armor had found a weakness in Wisconsin lines, which had been thinned to concentrate troops in the north. The Blues hastily prepared a mechanized column to break through the Red defenses.

By mid-day Monday, 60,000 chilled, exhausted, thoroughly soaked men, strung out over parts of a half-dozen counties, were poised for Armageddon — when suddenly it was all over. Distant commanders had huddled one last time, and the “cease fire” went out. The battle was called on account of rain.

### Post-game critique

If, in the grip of a kind of post-game euphoria, some Guardsmen felt they had proven themselves worthy for any bully then strutting the globe, the 2nd Army commanding general’s critique of the maneu-



Tom Doherty



# ERE

## war game

vers set them straight. Lt. Gen. Ford spared no one.

While he praised what he called the “high spirits” of men and officers, he criticized commanders for lack of competence, and troops for a refusal to follow.

After detailing specific shortcomings of officers, he concluded with the ominous understatement that “Some officers were not equal to the demands made upon them.” He then zeroed in on the enlisted men, claiming that their physical condition was poor and their discipline even worse.

In Louisiana, Gen. Brees was even more blunt in his criticism of the 50,000 Guardsmen there: “You are out of training. Your physical condition is poor. You drink too much water. You don’t eat regularly and you fail to follow instructions.” More than 800 men had been hospitalized during the maneuvers in Louisiana, most for heat prostration.

But the most extensive — and most demanding — criticisms were never released to the press or the Guardsmen.

After his appointment as Chief of Staff of the Army in 1939, Gen. George Marshall knew his first major task would be to manage a sudden, massive expansion of the Army. In the spring of 1940 he ordered Gen. Leslie McNair to organize a new headquarters to assess the training needs of units slated for mobilization and to prepare the standing Army to deliver that training.

From McNair’s point of view, the nationwide August maneuvers were important primarily as instruments for measuring the strengths and weaknesses of the Guard, and only secondarily as training exercises.

As reports from the field arrived at his desk in the Army War College on the Potomac, he realized just how big his job would be.

The list of National Guard deficiencies compiled by McNair and his staff included:

- “1. Obviously deficient training of small units and in minor tactics.
- “2. Faulty employment of the infantry division and of its combat tactics.
- “3. Failure fully to appreciate the purpose of motor vehicles and exploit their capabilities.
- “4. Inadequate reconnaissance and lack of contact between adjacent units.
- “5. Inadequate support of infantry by division artillery.
- “6. Faulty signal communications....”

The list went on. Clearly the Depression had left its mark on the Guard as it had on the Regular Army — the skimpy budgets, the climate of isolationism, the slackness that sets in when there is no sense of an urgent mission. Catch-up measures in the late 1930s had helped, but not enough.

### “A sound, methodical program”

Now McNair was confronted with the task of readying understrength, under-equipped, poorly trained, inadequately led state militias to take the field against one or more of the most modern, efficient and thoroughly professional armies in the world.

He knew that he would be pressured to distribute these forces as soon as they were activated. Voices within the War Department and Congress would call for their early



“Elements of the 32nd and 33rd Guard divisions were coiled for a massive, armor-tipped assault....” Two of the Red Arrow Division’s new light tanks, at the head of a column of trucks, wait for the mock battle to begin.

deployment into defensive roles or into specialized training. McNair took his stand early and dug in to defend it.

What was needed, he declared, was a “sound, methodical program of basic and general training.” The troops must first master fundamentals on the individual and small unit levels. Then they would engage in combined training as “combat teams” — infantry, armor and artillery acting in close coordination.

Finally, they would participate in “smooth and coordinated large unit training.”

In his speech to the officers at Camp McCoy, Gen. Ford had said, “There is nothing too difficult for the American soldier. There is no sacrifice too great.”

Congress and the American people were not so sure. In the summer of 1940, Americans wanted to save Great Britain and to crush the Nazis, but they did not want their soldiers to do the fighting. They wanted a share of the defense contracts and of the good life those contracts could bring to their hometowns, but they did not want local men forced into the Army those contracts were equipping.

Some doubted the United States had the character to take on the Nazis. In a Sunday newspaper article, one popular interpreter of psychological theory lamented that the Unites States’ social evolution had turned American men soft and “feminized.” Have the U.S. men lost the savage reflexes needed for their own defense? he asked.

On a more practical level, experts worried about the technical demands of modern warfare. To achieve mastery over exotic and demanding machines under the grimmest and most threatening condition, millions of men would have to know a lot more than simply how to march and shoot. Did the U.S. have enough time and enough bright, technically savvy young men to

meet the demands of a modern army?

But if the public and Congress were undecided about the proper role for the U.S. in the war, and the ability to succeed in whatever role cast in, President Franklin Roosevelt and the generals never lost sight of who the enemy was, what his capabilities were and what it would take to bring him down.

The enemy was Germany. To beat Germany the U.S. had to fight Germany’s kind of war on Germany’s territory. Therefore, that was the war the U.S. Army would be trained and equipped to fight.

Though no one could have known it at the time, all four Guard divisions training in central Wisconsin were destined to fight a very different kind of war in a very different part of the world.

### Worm’s-eye view

The big picture was lost upon the young Guardsmen packing up for the trip home. Many had enlisted within the past year after authorized strength levels had been raised. This was their first taste of Army life outside of the armory. Their view of the mock war was fragmentary and chaotic.

The experiences they were most likely to remember seldom had to do with battles, which, from their worm’s-eye view, were incomprehensible anyway. Men of Marshfield’s Company C, 128th Infantry, were more likely to remember the day a low grade dysentery swept through their ranks.

While most of their regiment was fiercely engaged in whipping the Michigan troops at the La Crosse River, Company C was held in reserve and glad of it. They attributed their disability to an excess of chokecherries, which they had the mixed fortune to find in abundance around their camp.

On the brighter side, a week later the mayor of their city showed up in person to deliver 10 gallons of ice cream, 50 pounds of cheese and 75

pounds of butter — a gift from the city, occasioned by the shortage of dairy foods at the maneuvers.

Like the other Wisconsin troops, the Marshfield men took the shortage personally. The gift was a moral victory, a slap in the face to those distant menu planners who sought to inflict dry bread and canned milk upon Wisconsin men in their home state.

Some men would remember combat as a series of fraternity pranks. One night during the final battle, men of the 128th from Beloit and nearby towns heaped barracks bags in a road, took to the woods, then ambushed and captured a column of Blue reconnaissance vehicles halted by the roadblock.

The same men later scattered paper plates in the path of enemy armor and vehemently insisted to a nearby umpire the plates were in fact mines. The tankers insisted the plates were garbage. The rattled umpire ruled in favor of the infantrymen.

On another occasion, confronted with an enemy officer who refused to be captured, infantrymen kidnapped him, drove off in his station wagon, deposited him on the road miles away and drove back to battle.

Throughout the final battle, troops heard reports of two cavalry officers on steaming mounts who, night after night, appeared in the rain on a dozen roads far from anything significant, huddling over a roadmap with a flashlight and muttering over and over, “Where the hell are we?”

There also was that last soldier lounging on a street corner in Sparta who declined the offer of a ride back to camp, telling the driver, “They don’t need me, I’m dead.”

At one time or another, all of the dazzled young amateurs became familiar with that peculiar combination of boredom and anxiety that settles upon soldiers when they sweat away the hours in ignorance, waiting for events to explode upon them.

They felt the exhilaration and terror of the outside man on an ice-skaters’ whip: A general miles away flicks his wrist, and they go plung-

ing headlong toward destruction on a muddy road at night. And they got a feel for the randomness of it all when an umpire breezily pronounced them wounded by shrapnel or dead from machine gun fire.

### Strike North, Strike South?

All through the last weeks of summer and into the fall, Guardsmen across the state bided their time, waiting for orders from Washington. As leaves colored and drifted down, they tried to imagine winter in Louisiana.

Rumor had it they would be heading there soon. Meanwhile, the front pages in Eau Claire and Marshfield, Appleton and Milwaukee continued to detail the piecemeal destruction of London by Nazi dive bombers, which now were coming at night.

But, on the other side of the world, history was being made that never reached the newspapers. For decades, two factions within the Japanese military had each been vying to impress its plan for strategic expansion upon the other.

That Japan would continue to use its growing military power to dominate Asia was a foregone conclusion. All that remained to be decided was the schedule of conquests. The Strike North group advocated use of conquered Chinese and Manchurian territory as a staging area for war against Russia. The Strike South group wanted to seize the Asian colonies of the western democracies.

In September 1940, the emperor decided. On the 19th, he signed the Tripartite Pact, allying his nation to Germany and Italy. The pact granted Japan control of any lands in Asia that it could take with its own power.

In turn, Germany and Italy were assured of Japanese pressure on the British fleet. Within weeks Japanese infantry divisions were swarming into French Indochina, where they met token resistance from Vichy forces.

Soon they were deep in the rainforests of Thailand, Vietnam and Laos, training intensively for jungle warfare.

The emperor had chosen to strike south.



# Engineers blast fire break in McCoy woods

*Story and photos by  
Keith Fenske  
At Ease Staff*

All is quiet along a sandstone ridge at Fort McCoy's Range 7. Several hundred feet away, a group of soldiers huddles behind an armored personnel carrier. A light rain washes nearby leaves.

"You may fire when ready," says a sergeant. The troops peer toward the ridgeline, waiting.

"Fire in the hole! Fire in the hole! Fire in the hole!" shouts a soldier. Everyone ducks for cover.

A huge flash of light flares from the ridge, a thunderous boom pierces the silence, and debris and smoke billow into the air.

"That's what I call a fireworks display!" cheers a soldier as the dust settles.

Welcome to the world of the

Army combat engineer.

This was business as usual for members of Company B, 173rd Engineer Battalion, who detonated 155 pounds of high explosives constructing firebreak at annual training.

"The demolition mission was required to clear large quantities of sandstone from a portion of the impact area's firebreak so our excavating equipment could navigate it," said Sgt. 1st Class Neil Schauer of Spencer, Wis. "We used Composition 4 (C-4) explosives to remove the impeding sandstone."

The firebreak, which surrounds the north impact area, consists of a 60-foot clearing between wooded areas. Most of the work on this firebreak had been done; the engineers' mission during annual training was to complete it.

A blast area survey was con-

ducted the day before to determine exact placement of explosive charges for maximum impact. The engineers also detonated a small test charge to help calculate the damage an explosion would cause to the sandstone.

The early morning rain didn't keep the engineers from nearly three hours of preparation. Soldiers wielding pickaxes and shovels dug holes six inches deep and two feet wide and inserted the C-4 charges. The holes were then packed with dirt and covered with sandbags to help force the energy of the blast downward at the rock being removed.

Detonation cord linked the C-4 charges so they would all blow at one time. One long strand of detonation cord was run to a safe distance from the blast area.

"Safety is the number one concern out here," said Spc. Jim Hoade, Chippewa Falls. "We take many precautions when handling explosives. There is absolutely no room for error."

With everyone a safe distance from the blast area, the engineers issued a warning to Range Control and received clearance to proceed with the mission. After a safety briefing, it was time to finish the job.

Everyone got into a safe position and the igniter was pulled. The explosion took only one second but accomplished the desired result.

Although the finale is brief, it is worth all the preparatory effort that goes into a demolition mission, according to Company B soldiers.

"I've been doing this for a lot of years and I enjoy the work," said Staff Sgt. Mike Crawford, Eau Claire. "It's fun working with this unit and the great soldiers that are a part of it. It's also fun performing a real mission like this, versus blowing up dirt on a range."

"This is what being an engineer is all about" he said.



A soldier with the 173rd Engineer Battalion, runs M-13 flash tube wire down the hill in preparation for the demolition.



A cloud of smoke and debris rises from a ridgeline on Range 7 following the detonation of C-4 high explosives Aug. 15 by engineers of Company B, 173rd Engineer Battalion.

# That's a wrap: 1158th stars in HEMTT video

*Story and Photos by  
Larry Sommers  
At Ease Staff*

**CLOSEUP:** A soldier under a kevlar helmet, seen through a rain-streaked windshield, jolts sideways behind the steering wheel as he drives a Heavy Expanded-Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT).

Welcome to Hollywood East, Fort McCoy, USA: At the wash rack, an assistant sprays water over

the HEMTT's cab to make rain. Spc. Patrick W. Palmer, clinging to the truck's side, rocks up and down to impart a lurching motion. Standing on a concrete stanchion in front of the stationary vehicle, a cameraman, his lens zoomed in tight, shoots through the windshield at Staff Sgt. Darrell W. DeBoer, who pretends to drive the vehicle.

They were videotaping a new Army-wide training tape: "HEMTT Safety." TACOM — the

U.S. Army Tank Automotive-arms Command — commissioned the 20-minute video. Ron Papiernik, TACOM's civilian manager in charge of the project, selected Kevin Irwin, a veteran Baltimore videographer and producer, to script, shoot and edit the tape.

Papiernik and Irwin turned to the 1158th Transportation Company, Wisconsin Army National Guard, for professional help in showing the right way to drive and maintain the workhorse tactical trucks.

"It's going to help 18-to-20-year-olds, who may have never driven anything larger than a passenger car," said DeBoer of Edgerton, a senior mechanic in the Beloit-based Detachment 1, 1158th Transportation Company. "They will see (the HEMTT) is massive — the truck alone, empty, weighs 40,000 pounds."

"I've seen videos like this myself, but often they are old and out-of-date. TACOM has taken the time and money to re-shoot this 'in the now,' and new soldiers will see this is not some old video but is up-to-date."

Irwin confirmed that the video's main purpose is to show young soldiers that the HEMTT is much different from their father's station wagon and must be approached with a whole different driving style.

Papiernik and Irwin had pre-



Videographer Kevin Irwin follows a Heavy Expanded-Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT) as it attempts a slalom course of highway cones at the Fort McCoy wash rack during the videotaping of an Army safety video. The slalom run at 15 miles per hour was designed to demonstrate the limits of maneuverability of the massive army truck. The HEMTT and drivers were provided for the video by the 1158th Transportation Company.

viously used drivers from the 1158th in a TACOM safety video on the M-1070 Heavy Equipment Transport (HET), which they shot in May 2000 at Arizona's Yuma Proving Grounds. Capt. Kevin Quist, battalion training officer for the unit's parent organization, the 732nd Maintenance Battalion, was the go-between who arranged for Wisconsin Guard troops and trucks to be used. DeBoer and Palmer, who were put on orders for one week in October 2001 to shoot the new HEMTT video, had not been a part of the previous effort; but after four days of shoot-

ing, the principals were impressed with their skills and attitude.

"We knew we could count on Capt. Quist," Papiernik said, "to provide us with troops that look sharp, are enthusiastic, and know what they're doing."

"Younger troops," explained Palmer — "if you just give them a manual and turn them loose with a truck, and you say, 'Read this book, follow the book' — someone's going to get injured. This will be the visual that shows them what the book tells them."

Added DeBoer: "It's a visual they can relate to."



Spc. Patrick W. Palmer, left, a mechanic with the 1158th Transportation Company, uses his body weight to rock the cab of a Heavy Expanded-Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT) with Staff Sgt. Darrell DeBoer at the wheel, as Tom Zoukis, a production assistant for Sharpshooters Video, Inc., of Baltimore, Md., sprays water to create the effect of rain on the truck's windshield. The Army training video, shot at Fort McCoy in October, was on the subject of safety, and featured members of the 1158th because of their professionalism and military appearance.



# Chaplain corps keeps packing spirit



**Soldiers of Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, gather around chaplain assistant Staff Sgt. Jeffrey L. Miller (left) and Chaplain (Maj.) Kevin J. Hoogland for a field expedient prayer service.**

*Story and photo by Gina Williams  
At Ease Staff*

Sunday morning is a time of comfort for most people, who have the luxury of sitting inside a large house of worship with padded pews. But for America's warriors, "church is whenever the chaplain arrives," according to Lt. Col. Terrance L. Stratton, Wisconsin State Area Command chaplain. Faced with a shortage of chaplains for this year's annual training, the soldiers in the field

took advantage of worship services whenever they could. For soldiers like Spc. Tony D. Fritcher, Appleton, an infantryman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, prayer services are a chance to spend some time coping with certain stresses of the field. "I needed an attitude adjustment, and God always seems to put me in the right place," said Fritcher. Chaplain (Maj.) Kevin J. Hoogland, of Merrill, Wis., led prayer services for 2nd Battalion, 127th

Infantry, and other Wisconsin units. "I'm assigned to the 1st Battalion, 632nd Armor, and this year I'm (also) acting 32nd Infantry Brigade Chaplain," said Hoogland. "Our mission is to provide leadership in moral, ethical and spiritual guidance." During annual training exercises, chaplains have to be available 24 hours a day for emergencies that are called in to the Brigade Emergency Operations Center. The emergencies range from death in a soldier's family to attempted suicides, accidents, or simply problems coping with stress of deployment.

Chaplains also have to be field-expedient, moving services to quiet or safe locations in the field as circumstances dictate. "There's a chaplain's kit in the truck but I prefer just a Bible," Hoogland said. "I like to go 'light,' that way I can do a service anywhere." "In my unit we have no chaplain's assistant. Other units have chaplains assistants and no chaplains," Hoogland said. "Some units have no chaplains and no chaplains' assistants." Finding qualified candidates to strengthen the Chaplains Corps is a challenge. "There is a shortage of priests in the outside world," said Chaplain (Capt.) Dan H. Farley, a Roman Catholic priest who serves four civilian churches and is chaplain of the 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery. "We live in a modern, materialistic society, where there are too many options and people don't hear the call to ministry." Farley explained that he has one soldier training to be a chaplain's assistant, but there's not a lot of room for advancement. A soldier must move out of the chaplain's assistant position into another

job to be promoted. This causes a vacancy in the chaplain's assistant position and a new soldier has to be recruited and trained. When not working for the Guard, Farley does marriage intervention for couples on the verge of divorce and participates in various outreach programs. However, wearing a uniform does have a certain impact. "I very much enjoy interaction with soldiers," said Farley. "I wear the same uniform they do and when you approach them, there's a connectedness that opens doors which otherwise would not be open. They normally wouldn't talk to a pastor, but when one's standing right in front of them they open right up." From a priest's perspective, Farley noted there is little difference between civilians and soldiers. "They all have issues," said Farley. "The personal issues are all the same and the biggest challenge is time. There's not enough time to do the ministry you want to do." Chaplain services are important for maintaining troop morale, according to Cpl. Brian Blahnik, Stevens Point. "It helps to keep the soldiers motivated," said Blahnik. "They may attend services regularly at home and during annual training they may not have the opportunity to attend and that could impact negatively. In the military, especially the reserve side, you're taking civilians, and taking a lot of freedoms away, and asking them to make sacrifices. Religious beliefs are the last thing they're going to sacrifice." "When you have chapel services, it's always something you look forward to," Blahnik said. "It's a kick of motivation. When you don't have it, it's just another day in the field."

## Grabbing the sky hook: gusty, dusty and dicey

*By Lisa Munson  
At Ease Staff*

Standing less than two feet under a hovering, 22,000-pound aircraft: Normally, not recommended. Not something that most people would even consider — except, perhaps, when time is short and the alternatives may be even more dangerous. "When time is a critical aspect of the mission, we're going to opt for the route that takes five minutes to complete instead of 40 minutes," said Staff Sgt. Derek Growley, a supply sergeant for the 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery. The time-saver is sling loading — attaching thousands of pounds of supplies or equipment to a hovering helicopter. While the procedure itself takes less than two minutes, it also knocks a lot of time off the clock and may be, in the long run, the safest transportation option. "Sling loading may prevent me from driving my hefty deuce-and-a-half through enemy territory," Growley pointed out.

Growley and two other sling load inspectors trained soldiers from several battalions on sling load procedures and safety precautions during annual training at Fort McCoy in August. The soldiers first learned hand signals to direct the incoming helicopter to the place where the load is waiting to be airlifted. They then learned how to properly attach the sling load harness around the object, which could be as heavy as a Humvee. After the harness is on, a three-soldier team hooks the load onto the hovering aircraft: One watches for possible safety violations, one hooks the load, and one steadies the soldier hooking the load. "You would be amazed at the wind force coming from the helicopters," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Donovan, a sling load inspector. "Without that support, the soldier would be blown all over the place." Safety goggles, face scarves, helmets, and tucked in BDU blouses are standard wind protection for sling loading.



**Maintenance troops from Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, get ready to hook a water trailer to a UH-60 Black Hawk.**

## Two great peoples divided by a common tongue: Brits 'tub their kits' while Yanks lug rucksacks

*Lisa Munson  
At Ease Staff*

"I don't drink coffee," said Capt. Fraser Cuttle. "I prefer my Russian packed tea, thank you." Not your typical American GI: A Brit, in fact. Cuttle and two other soldiers from the United Kingdom trained with 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, as part of a soldier exchange program during annual training at Fort McCoy in August. In the exchange program, soldiers from each nation learn

how the other nation trains its troops. "I've been having a wonderful time here," said Cuttle. "The Wisconsin National Guard really knows how to treat their soldiers." Cuttle says the National Guard is comparable to the Territorial Army in Britain. "The dedication of the soldiers is on the same level. We do physical fitness and eat three square meals a day. Also, we 'tub' it every chance we get," said Cuttle. "Tub" is British Army slang for moving long

distances on foot while carrying one's life-belongings on one's back. "The rank structure and officer-enlisted relationship is also very similar," says Cuttle. "The biggest difference is equipment availability. I asked a soldier here how they would survive if one of their humvees broke down. He told me they'd just get another one from fleet. Back in Britain, we'd be tubing it back to camp." "I don't know about the whole fleet abundance of vehicles," said Cuttle. "I prefer to be in control

of my own survival." Another thing Cuttle had to adjust to was the handy size of the Army-issued rucksack. In the British Army, rucksacks, called "kits," are the size of the American duffel bags. On every road march, all soldiers are required to carry one. Another difference is that there are fewer incentives to join the Territorial Army. Where the National Guard offers extensive college benefits, great retirement pensions and numerous opportunities to travel, the Territorial Army can only offer

worldwide travel. "When I heard about all the money available to these kids fresh out of high school, I couldn't believe it. If Great Britain were to offer such benefits, there would be a waiting list to join. It's absolutely incredible," said Cuttle. After his two weeks in Wisconsin, Cuttle headed home. Capt. Michael Hanson, commander of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, went home with Capt. Cuttle to observe British Territorial Army training in Cheshire, England.



# 13th Medical Dental Detachment enjoys serving state residents at free clinics

Story and photos by  
Julie Friedman  
At Ease Staff

The soldiers of the 13th Medical Dental Detachment (MEDDD) made friends in two more communities this year while conducting their annual GuardCare exercise in Gillett and Marinette in northeastern Wisconsin.

Since 1995 the exercises have served 17 different counties. This year a total of 963 people took advantage of the clinics held Aug. 13-17 in cooperation with the Oconto County and Marinette County health departments.

The free clinics, which are set up in local schools, provide basic health screening services and health education for residents who lack insurance coverage. Many who do have insurance bring their children specifically for dental sealants, because many insurance carriers do not cover the expensive preventive treatment.

One parent who really appreciated the free sealants was Ruth Carlson of Suring, who brought three of her four children to the clinic in Gillett. Several years ago her oldest son had his teeth

sealed, and she and her husband had to pay the entire cost themselves.

"When I saw the article in the paper about this clinic," she said, "I realized right away what a great opportunity this would be for my other children."

Carlson said she was especially pleased by how friendly the Guard

soldiers were and how well her youngest daughter Amber, age 8, behaved for them.

"She's usually not very cooperative, but she did really good here," Carlson said.

In addition to the dental sealants, the clinics offered HeadStart exams for children ages 3-6, sports

physicals for school-aged youths, and physical exams for adults including vision screenings, glaucoma tests, and vaccinations for tetanus and hepatitis B. Smoking cessation counseling was also available, with free nicotine patch kits provided by the University of Wisconsin Medical School's Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention.

Barb Martin of Oconto came to the clinic in Gillett and got a com-

plete physical exam, including an electrocardiogram and a cholesterol screening.

"I have to admit that I put this off for a long time," she said, "because I'm normally so intimidated by doctors — but this is such a nice group of people. They're very professional but they make you feel so relaxed."

For the soldiers of the 13th MEDDD, the exercises are good training for actual deployments. The two detachments from Madison and Marshfield get to work together in a real-life scenario where they move to an area, set up a clinic, and start providing services within 24 hours.

"It's good for us to work as a team with the Madison detachment," said Pvt. Jason Manning, a dental technician in the Marshfield detachment. "It's also nice to help out the people who need it."

"This is a lot more rewarding than just going to Fort McCoy," said Sgt. Wendy Hawley, a dental technician. "You feel a lot of pride because you know you're doing something worthwhile." Hawley has participated in four GuardCare exercises in her seven years with the 13th MEDDD.

Spec. Kathryn "Coty" Hutchens is a dental assistant in civilian life who joined the 13th MEDDD three years ago. "I just love these exercises," she said. "I wait every year for this. That's why I joined the Guard."



**Amber Carlson, 8, is all smiles before having dental sealants applied.**



**Sgt. Wendy Hawley watches as 8-year-old Donald Perrault of Adams brushes his teeth before getting dental sealants applied during GuardCare 2001 in August.**



**ABOVE: Spec. Heather Schutt entertains 2-year-old Tiffany Johnson of Suring while the toddler's older sisters get dental sealants.**

**RIGHT: Amber Carlson proudly shows off her new dental sealants to her mother, Ruth.**



## Officer Candidate School graduates 32

By Gary Thompson  
At Ease Staff

"All the way!" shouted 32 officer candidates upon their graduation from the 426th Regiment's Officer Candidate School Class 43.

Of the graduates, 21 Wisconsin Army National Guard soldiers and one United States Army Reserve soldier accepted their commissions as second lieutenants.

Class president 2nd Lt. Scott Kulla received the Erickson Trophy for distinguished leadership and academic achievement. The Erickson Trophy is a replica of the Sons of Liberty bowl designed by Paul Revere during the Revolutionary War.

Graduates who postponed commissions received certificates of eligibility and will assume their roles as second lieutenants within two years.



**From left to right, back row- Tony Steinhoff, Chad Simandl, Thomas Hay, Matthew Cronin, Jeremy O'Leary, Michael Fuchsel, Keith Curran, Courtney Boehme, Alice Holmes, LeaAnn Kavalasukas, Rhonda Klink, Nathaniel Bailey, Jason Leistiko, Henry Blust, Will Myers, Douglas Denson, Andre Cieslicki, Scott Kulla. Front row- Paul Mitchell, Brian Lund, Daniel Albaugh, James Cavanaugh, Mark Bailey, Steven O'Keefe, Jared Shryock, Douglas Kolb, Daniel Pipgras, Don Porschien, Andrew Weiler, Charles Crowley, Paul Gellerup. Missing from photo: Angela Oconnell. Photo courtesy of Distinctive Images.**



# 1157th picks up after Mother Nature

Story and photo by  
Larry Sommers  
At Ease Staff

Fifty members of the 1157th Transportation Company helped Oshkosh and surrounding communities recover after severe thunderstorms ravaged the area June 11 with 90-mph winds, heavy rains, large hail and lightning.

The strong winds felled many trees and downed power lines, leaving more than 43,000 residents without electricity for several days,

about half of them in the city of Oshkosh. Heavy rains also caused localized flooding.

The Wisconsin Army National Guard quickly provided water trailers to Portage, Winnebago and Wood counties to provide water to those affected by electrical outages.

Gov. Scott McCallum declared a state of emergency and, as piled-up debris began to pose health and safety hazards, called in the Guard to assist with the cleanup.

Fifty soldiers and 18 trucks

from the 1157th Transportation Company, Oshkosh, were called to state active duty for three days.

Soldiers, working by hand, loaded tons of tree limbs onto trucks and carted them away to city-approved landfills. Spirits were high among Guard members as they helped local citizens recover from the effects of the storm.

"This is our mission — it's what we do," said Cpl. Rob Linberg, New London. "We're here and we're happy to be helping out."



Spcs. Dan Lipinski, left, and Jon Butzlaff, of the 1157th Transportation Company, Wisconsin Army National Guard, use a web strap to tie down tons of brush and timber on an Army 5-ton cargo truck. The two were among 50 members of the unit activated June 15-17, 2001, to clear debris from the streets of Oshkosh after a windstorm ravaged the city.

## Fighter Wing commander logs 6,000 hours aloft

By Master Sgt. Larry Rush  
115th Fighter Wing

When Brig. Gen. Fred R. Sloan, commander of the 115th Fighter Wing, taxied back to the ramp in his F-16 Fighting Falcon after a training flight July 25, he found a crowd waiting for him.

Wisconsin National Guard state headquarters personnel joined members of the 115th to welcome the general back to earth after completion of his 6,000th flying hour.

Accumulating 6,000 hours of flying time as a pilot gets people's attention. Few aviators accumulate that much experience and training in the air, especially in jet fighters, where Sloan has logged most of his time.

"Although many would look at this as a personal achievement, I think it speaks more to the tremendous quality of people who have served, and are

serving today maintaining and flying our aircraft," Sloan said.

"The standards for excellence I was taught early in my career by the people who built this organization into what it is today, and the people who continue that tradition, make flying for this unit a privilege."

Sloan is a command pilot. Since receiving his wings in August 1972, he has flown the T-33, T-37, T-38, F-102, O-2A, A-37, A-10, and C-131 aircraft, and he is combat-ready in the F-16C. He has been commander of the 115th Fighter Wing since 1989.



Brig. Gen. Sloan

## Changes...

Wisconsin Air National Guard Lt. Col. Gunther Neumann is the new commander of Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center.

Neumann assumed command at Volk in October, succeeding Col. Jim McMurry. McMurry, who had commanded Volk Field since 1994, retired after nearly 30 years of military service in the U.S. Air Force and the Air National Guard.

One of the Wisconsin Army Guard's major commands is also under new leadership.

Col. David Gapinski took command of the Milwaukee-based 57th Field Artillery Brigade in September. Gapinski succeeded Col. James Schiller, who is now assigned to

the Army Guard's state headquarters in Madison.

The Wisconsin Army Guard's newest battalion commander is Lt. Col. Paul Russell.

Russell took command of 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry when it was established in Madison in September as part of the 32nd Brigade's conversion from mechanized to light infantry.

Lt. Col. Todd Nehls, commander of 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry in Appleton, was named to head Task Force Noble Badger — the Wisconsin Guard's airport security operation.

Nehls will continue to command the infantry battalion.

## Bosses visit AT



Sgt. Carl Abendroth, of Battery B, 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery, briefs civilian employers during an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Boss Lift to Fort McCoy Aug. 18. More than 100 employers from across Wisconsin spent a day with the soldiers to learn first hand what they do during weekend drills and annual training. Photo by Keith Fenske.

## 128th security troops arrest water damage

By Master Sgt. Wayne Rodriguez  
128th Air Refueling Wing

Security personnel of the 128th Air Refueling Wing are trained to respond to any threat to the wing and its resources. On Wednesday, July 18, that threat came from thousands of gallons of water when a water line broke right under the weapons armory.

When the line broke, water began to come through the concrete floor of the armory. As Master Sgt. Jim Larson, a flight sergeant with the Security Forces Squadron, was walking past the armory at around 1:00 p.m., he heard the sound of running water. Opening the door to investigate, he saw the armory floor was already covered with 3 to 4 inches of dirty brown water. Larson immediately notified the wing's civil engineers, who in turn notified the base fire department.

Master Sgt. Joe Parlato, assistant installation chief, security forces, credited the quick response by Security Forces troops with preventing thousands of dollars in equipment losses and, most importantly, the loss of mission capabilities.

"The outstanding combined efforts of many people and organizations on base led to a quick solution to the emergency," Parlato said.



Master Sgt. Joe Parlato uses a snow shovel to scoop water out of the 128th Security Forces Squadron armory. Wisconsin Air National Guard photo.



# Live ammo adds z-z-zing! to training



Every step is measured as soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry move through the woods with live ammunition at Fort McCoy.



The intensity level skyrockets when moving through infantry lanes with live ammunition. A Bravo Company soldier clears a bunker using grenade simulators and live ammunition.



For many soldiers, loading live rounds into their rifles only happens at the rifle range. The live-fire training provided Bravo Company a chance to get the feel of moving tactically while using real bullets.

By Jim Wagner  
At Ease Staff

Practicing infantry skills in the back woods of Fort McCoy is one thing, but using live ammunition is another.

Soldiers of Company B, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, New Richmond, found out what live-fire movement is all about during this summer's annual training August 11-25. For many, it was the first time they carried their loaded weapons outside of a qualification range.

It's more daunting than you might think.

"Oh, yeah, I was *very* conscious of carrying a loaded weapon," said Spec. Mick Raymis.

Raymis, a Turtle Lake native and student at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, says a loaded weapon makes a soldier much more aware of moving through a heavily-wooded lane, with all its snags and potholes. All it takes is one misstep for an accidental discharge — something that could seriously injure, even kill, a fellow soldier.

"Actually, I was more nervous about the guy behind me," Raymis said, only half-jokingly.

That added edge of danger, they say, is what made this year's training at the Fort McCoy ranges even better than before.

Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES) gear, the laser tag-like gear used for simulated battles, doesn't give troops that added situational awareness that is a critical part of any military operation. In fact, the gear could reinforce bad habits like not treating the weapon seriously, something that can endanger soldiers in the field.

Company B was only the 16th unit to use the live-fire lanes at Range 6, a forested and hilly range that lends itself well to training exercises like ambushes, bunker removal and anti-tank movements.

Starting from a location roughly a half-mile away, Bravo Company set out to remove a bunker manned by an undetermined number of enemies, according to the script. Once contact was initiated by the "enemy," represented in this case by loudspeakers blaring out gunfire sounds, the company broke down into a support fire group and flanking fire team.

While the support fire team laid down a suppressing stream of fire into the bunker areas, the flanking team's wedge circled to the right. A quickly-thrown smoke grenade was the signal to the support fire team to divert fire away from the bunker so the flanking team could advance. A two-soldier crew from the flanking team moved up to the bunker and lobbed a grenade.

So a bunch of soldiers are just chewing up the landscape and a bunker with live rounds, you say. Where's the training in that, outside of making people nervous about carrying their weapon?

The real value of live-fire training comes with the big-budget pop-up targets scattered throughout the range. These targets simulate the enemy, which need to be taken out by squads before advancing.

There are even moving pop-up targets for added realism, including a moving tank for anti-armor missions. If you look closely at one of the bunkers, you'll see a pristine target that's never been hit by round, a glar-

ing challenge to any infantryman.

Staff Sgt. Mark Ball, a Bravo Company squad leader who lives in New Richmond and works at Frontier Communications as a telephone and cable technician, thinks the new lane is a good start but still needs some work.

"It's realistic, but a lot more filtered than what regular lanes training has been like," Ball said. "The feedback we give on this lane, though, will be used by the range control guys who I'm sure will make improvements."

Another feature of the exercise, the strict structure of the lanes training, has many infantrymen itching for more original input into the script. Using "hot" weapons for lanes training, range officials said, is too new to allow such ad lib movements. Officials expect that to change as soldiers get more experience.

"We realize we're spoon feeding the mission to the guys," said Staff Sgt. Charles Anderson of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry. Anderson, a foreman at Amsco in Birchwood and one of the observer/controllers in the exercise, said the live fire is a mix of challenging training and observing safety precautions.

"We want to make it challenging but give them a chance to hit the target," Anderson said. "Of course, there's a lot of changes that will need to be made, but that's why the range control folks let us on the range in the first place — to proof it and come up with suggestions."

"Overall, this range is a fantastic idea," Anderson continued. "(Range control) has obviously put a lot of time and finances into making this range such a success. Eventually, this will be a beautiful lane."



Soldiers from Bravo company also acted as an opposing force (OPFOR) for other 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry units.

## 'Fun stuff' dominates final training day

By Lisa Munson  
At Ease Staff

After almost two weeks of busting their humps in hot, humid weather, all the soldiers participating in annual training had a chance to have a go at the fun stuff. Anyone who wanted to could rappel off a 55-foot tower and go on an orientation flight in a UH-60 Black Hawk or UH-1 Huey helicopter.

"This is definitely one of the coolest things I've done in the Guard," said Pfc. Danny Keck of Company A, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, after his flight. "The experience has been very memorable."

"After working hard, it's nice to be able to relax and do something fun," said Spc. Adam Schneider, also of Company A. "It's a good reward, and I would

tell people interested in the Guard the benefits such as these."

"After these soldiers work for two weeks straight, they deserve something for a job well done," said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Paul Gill of 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry. "I would say these are the things that convince their friends to join the Guard."

The rappelling and helicopter rides lasted all day so anybody who

wanted to could participate.

"We got about 600 soldiers to get up on these flights," said Gill. "I'd say about 90 percent of them have never flown before."

Company D, 1st Battalion, 632nd Armor was in charge of teaching soldiers how to rappel. After a ten-minute class on how to tie a "seat," soldiers practiced rappelling off a 30-foot building. Then it was on to the 55-footer.

"The most terrifying aspect of rappelling is that initial step onto the wall. It feels like you're throwing yourself to your death," said Pfc. Brian Lambert of Company D.

"Days like these are important," said Capt. John Meier, Company D commander, "because it gives soldiers a chance to do something like rappelling, which is fun but also a good soldier skill to know."



# 106th Quarry Team ‘rocks on’



**Pfc. Deanna Hughes, Barnes, Wis., guides a dump truck through the quarry site while other members of the 106th Quarry Team operate the crusher.**



**Pfc. Abby Hiser, Park Falls, Wis., operates the generator for the crusher.**

*Story and photos by Steve Olson  
At Ease Staff*

If your knowledge of quarry operations consists of old cartoons depicting Fred Flintstone at work, you’d certainly be amazed by a new engineer unit’s ability to turn big rocks into little ones.

The mission of the 106th Engineer Team (Quarry) of Ashland is to meet the almost insatiable demand for gravel by Army road-building units. And since the Army does not always build roads in areas where this precious commodity is readily available from civilian sources, quarry units are needed.

The 106th came into existence in September 2000. In June, the unit deployed for annual training for the first time.

For their initial AT, the engineers set up their quarry site in the Chequamegon National Forest near Iron River, Wis., about halfway between Ashland and Superior. In exchange for use of the site, the Forest Service received the gravel produced by the 106th.

The centerpiece of the unit’s quarry operation is the crusher. Consisting of a primary jaw crusher combined with a secondary roll crusher, the apparatus produces about 75 tons of gravel per hour. When it’s operating at maximum capacity, the crusher can produce twice that amount. Although well maintained, the 106th’s crusher was manufactured in 1968, so it is much older than most of the unit’s members.

Young soldiers in a brand-new unit can present some interesting challenges. But the enthusiasm of soldiers who are learning new skills is tremendously rewarding for the leadership, says Staff Sgt. Julie Oppelt, a quarry supervisor and the unit’s full-time training NCO.

“There’s so much to learn because this is new for almost everyone. But working with young soldiers and learning new

things right along with them is certainly the best part of the job,” says Oppelt, who’s been in the Guard 15 years.

Because he’s the only soldier with ample experience operating a crusher, Sgt. Duane Garz, a construction worker from Washburn, has been a valuable mentor to the other soldiers. “This crusher is pretty much the same as the ones I use in my civilian job. So I get asked a lot of questions, which I enjoy. Everyone in the unit is picking things up very fast.”

One of the first, and most important, lessons in crushing rock is avoiding accidents and injuries. “We always stress safety,” Oppelt explains. “We make sure there’s no loose clothing that can get caught in the crusher. We always wear safety equipment, including respirators so we don’t breathe dust, while working on the machine. One of our biggest safety points is to stay alert and aware of where you are at all times. There are trucks and other heavy equipment moving around the site. And because of the noise from the crusher, you can’t always hear something coming at you. So you have to be aware of what’s going on around you.”

The 106th is striving to expand on the success of its first annual training. On some future projects, the quarry team may operate jointly with the 829th Engineer Company of Richland Center, which specializes in carpentry, masonry and other building trades.

When it tackles future assignments, the 106th might have the benefit of even more rock-pulverizing muscle. Next June, the unit is scheduled to get a new crusher approximately three times the size of the current one.

And with a bigger and better crusher, the old 1968 model will finally be a relic of the past, just like the dinosaurs in Fred Flintstone’s quarry.



**The 106th Quarry Team’s crusher is the backbone of the operation during the unit’s annual training at the Chequamegon National Forest in June.**

## Off-duty F-16 crew chief pulls driver from blazing car

*By Larry Sommers  
At Ease Staff*

An off-duty Wisconsin Air National Guard member was hailed as a hero for reaching into a burning automobile to save its elderly driver from certain death.

Tech. Sgt. Keith Atkins, an F-16 crew chief with the 115th Fighter Wing, was working in his garage in Stoughton, Wis., on a Sunday afternoon, July 15, when he heard a neighbor shouting, “Get out of there! Get out of there!”

Emerging into the street, Atkins saw a car on fire, the passenger compartment almost fully engulfed in flames and the driver still in his seat.

Without hesitating, Atkins ran to assist the driver, whose upper body was al-



**Keith Atkins**

ready in flames. Pulling the burning man out by his legs, he dragged him to the grass nearby, which itself caught fire. His wife, Jean Atkins, brought a garden hose and they sprayed the man and the lawn with water to extinguish the fire.

Medics transported the driver, 88-year-old Claire Vesterdahl, by helicopter to the University of Wisconsin Hospital in Madison, where he died of his injuries the next day.

The car was completely gutted by fire before police and fire personnel arrived at the scene. “By the time we got here, he would have been dead,” said Stoughton Police Sgt. Brian Gowan.

Atkins expressed the hope that he would not be confronted again with a similar situation. “This was too much excitement for a Sunday,” he told a local news reporter.



**Tech. Sgt. Keith Atkins, an F-16 maintenance crew chief with the 115th Fighter Wing, pulled a driver out of this car, which was ablaze near Atkin’s house in Stoughton, Wis. Though Atkins and his wife quickly put out the flames enveloping his body, 88-year-old Claire Vesterdahl died the next day at the University of Wisconsin Hospital in Madison. Photo by Larry Sommers.**



# Artillery unit slims down, still packs mean whallop



Sgt. 1st Class Duane Beyer, left, of Shawano goes over maintenance paperwork with Spc. Chris Walport, Stevens Point.



Cannoneers from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery, load an M-109 self-propelled howitzer during annual training at Fort McCoy.



LEFT: Members of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery place antennas atop their command and control center during annual training at Fort McCoy in August.

Story and photos By  
Adam Bradley  
At Ease Staff

Combat-ready, mission capable and equipped to blast high explosives miles into the targeted location, ground-trembling howitzers make a great combination.

Although the 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery is losing its M-109A5 self-propelled howitzers, it's also gaining the more mobile M-102 howitzer to continue the legacy of one of Wisconsin's proud field artillery units.

It takes more than 320 skilled soldiers to perform the 120th's job. The job? Blow up stuff — a job almost every soldier would love. Even with the battalion's change to light field artillery, the 120th still will fire powerful howitzers in the same fashion with the same experienced soldiers.

"You wish you could stay with (the M-109), because we know it already — but we are looking forward to the new guns and the change of pace," said Spc. Allen Rosenow, ammunition team chief for Battery B.

"It will be a challenge," said Spc. Scott Vehrenkam, a cannoneer from Battery C. "People get attached to their guns, but in the end everyone will like it better."

Firing long-range weapons toward a target miles away isn't as easy as "point and shoot," regardless of which earth-shaking gun is fired.

"There are a lot of things to take into consideration, such as wind, heat, weight and even the rotation of the earth," said Staff Sgt. Ed McKenna, fire direction center chief from the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery. It takes a lot of practice.

Throughout the battalion's five batteries, there are many different jobs that must be completed for a successful mission. Whether it's the M-109 or M-102, a lot of skill is required. Directions for when and where to move each battery come from the Tactical Operations Center. Commanders also decide whether to bombard the target by coordinating the batteries to fire at the same time or to pass the mission to individual batteries, said McKenna.

Each battery must then figure out, with help from the fire direction center and forward observers, the exact map coordinates

where the rounds should land.

"With an accurate gun location, target location, observation point location, weather data and ammunition data, we can put a round into a garbage can from any practical distance," said Capt. Mark Kukulka, commander of Battery C.

After a gun fires its shell, a team of forward observers, who are hidden but can see the target area, record the position of the shell's impact and its distance from the targeted location. By using simple geometry, the battery then can dial in the correction and pinpoint the target for more shelling.

"It's great being up on the hill looking over the impact area and basically controlling the guns," said Pfc. Jim Goodenough, a forward observer for Battery C.

Spc. Steven Koth, fire direction control support specialist with headquarters battery, who helps to plot the grid coordinates, said, "It's a lot of work, but the work's a lot of fun."

One of the greatest advantages that comes along with the 18 new howitzers is the chance to blow up more stuff, or what the 120th calls "training opportunities." The M-102 howitzers, which are towed on wheels, require less maintenance than a self-propelled howitzer on tracks, which equates to more time and money for training. The new guns can be used for year-round training, said Sgt. Jodi Young, Battery B howitzer section chief, whereas the battalion usually fired its self-propelled howitzers only about four months out of the year.

"It will put more guns on the field," said Young. "Change is good, we're always willing to learn new things."

Overall, spirits are still high in the unit. Soldiers agree the thunderous power of these new weapons will continue the thrill and pride of being in the 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery.

"It's a great unit. They take good care of you, and give you great help when needed," said Pfc. Chou Vang, a medic from headquarters battery.

Spc. Kevin Wall, fire direction specialist from Battery B, said, "I love it. It's a good time and a great chance to get away from everything."



An M-109 self-propelled 155-mm howitzer fires a round into the impact area at Fort McCoy during annual training for Battery A, 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery.



# National News Briefs

## Servicemember’s Group Life plan now includes family

The Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance plan will also cover troops’ spouses and eligible children beginning Nov. 1, 2001.

The Veterans’ Opportunities Act of 2001, signed by President Bush last spring, allows for up to \$100,000 coverage for military spouses and \$10,000 coverage for each child.

If the service member has SGLI coverage of \$100,000 or more, maximum coverage for the spouse will be automatic, and premiums will be deducted along with the member’s premium from each month’s pay. If the service member carries less than \$100,000 coverage, however, the spouse’s coverage can be no higher than the member’s, Navy Capt. Chris Kopang explained.

“For instance, if the member only had \$50,000 in coverage on himself, he can only get \$50,000 for his spouse,” said Kopang, Department of Defense director of compensation.

He added that spouse coverage must be elected in \$10,000 increments. Premiums will be based on amount of coverage elected and the spouse’s age.

Spouse’s Age	Rate per \$1,000	Max Monthly Premiums
Under 35	\$.09	\$9.00
35-44	\$.13	\$13.00
45-49	\$.20	\$20.00
50-54	\$.32	\$32.00
55+	\$.55	\$55.00

Coverage for children up to age 18, or 23 if a fulltime student, is free and automatic, so long as the member is participating in SGLI, Kopang said. Eligible Reserve component members will receive the same family-member coverage with premiums being deducted from their drill pay, he said.

Service members will be able to decline or reduce spousal coverage, but officials are still working out the details. “Opt out” procedures and updates will be posted to the SGLI web site at [www.insurance.va.gov/sglivgli/sglifam.htm](http://www.insurance.va.gov/sglivgli/sglifam.htm).

Kopang cautioned service members to think carefully before opting out. “Members may sometimes feel they don’t need life insurance for a spouse, especially if the spouse doesn’t work outside the home,” he said. “However, look at the cost of providing childcare, a nanny perhaps, or other things that contribute to maintaining the home. These are costs service members don’t always realize they’ll have.”

Eligibility for spouse and children’s coverage would end if the member terminates coverage, separates, retires, dies, or if the couple divorces. However, spouse coverage will extend 120 days past the date eligibility ends.

“That will give the spouse the opportunity to convert their policy to a commercial policy,” Kopang said.

Spouse coverage can be converted to commercial policies when the service member separates from the military, but cannot be converted to the Veterans’ Group Life Insurance plan.

### Maj. Gen. James new Air National Guard director

President George W. Bush has nominated Maj. Gen. Daniel James III to become the 11th director of the Air National Guard.

James, 56, has been the adjutant general of Texas since Nov. 1995. If confirmed by the Senate, he would be promoted to lieutenant general and would succeed Maj. Gen. Paul Weaver Jr. who has been the Air Guard’s director since Jan. 1998.

James is a command pilot with more than 4,000 hours in fighter and trainer aircraft. He flew over 300 combat missions in Vietnam, and he completed two tours of active duty in Southwest Asia where he served as a forward air controller and F-4 Phantom aircraft commander.

### Tricare for Life bill passed

Congress recently passed and the President signed a bill that fulfills the promise of lifetime medical care that was made to all servicemembers upon enlistment. The program is called TRICARE for Life and became effective Oct. 1, 2001.

A companion program called TRICARE Senior Pharmacy Program (TSSP) covers prescription drugs and was effective April 1, 2001.

There are no enrollment fees or registration procedures for either; while there are some co-pays and deductions for the pharmacy program, the TRICARE for Life program does not appear to have any additional costs. These programs will be essentially cost free for some people and may cost less than the present health care programs for others.

Under the old rules, TRICARE, which replaced CHAMPUS around 1998, was not available to anyone after they reached the age of 65. The Fiscal Year 2001 National Defense Authorization Act eliminated that restriction and TRICARE now covers retirees from age 60 to 65 and then becomes secondary to Medicare, Parts A and B for the rest of your life. It pays the deductibles and additional charges that Medicare does not pay. With TRICARE you do not need a Medicare supplement.

# 127th infantry moves out

By Jim Wagner  
At Ease Staff

It was getting late, and events seemed to be getting ahead of the best efforts of mission planners from 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry.

In less than 15 hours, battalion troops would be air-inserted into a simulated combat zone, notionally an area somewhere in Kuwait.

With seemingly thousands of last-minute details to address, there was no guarantee of a successful deployment.

In the stifling environs of the battalion’s Tactical Operations Center (TOC), without even a fan to move the thick August air, the battalion’s leaders gathered to review the details and to make decisions that would mean success or failure. At stake were the reputation of the Appleton-based battalion as a battle-ready unit and the safety of hundreds of soldiers.

In addition, the soldiers were training for the first time as a light infantry unit, one battalion of the 32nd Infantry Brigade’s new configuration as light — no longer mechanized — infantry. The conversion is intended to make the 32nd more relevant in the lighter Army of the 21st century.

For members of the 127th, the conversion required giving up their M-113 armored personnel carriers in favor of “leather personnel carriers” — infantry lingo for “boots.” For mission planners, the conversion changed the way they’ve done business: UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters replaced ground transport as a means to get soldiers to the fight.

Conditions this year were the exact opposite of last year’s annual training, said 32nd Brigade officials, making for a challenging training environment. Last year, the battalion was slogging through rain-drenched fields, humvees bogging down in the fields and on the roads. This year, soldiers hoped for even a hint of rain to cool the stifling heat.

It was so dry that headlights were needed to see through the thick clouds of dust on the ranges. Engineers felled trees around the north impact area, building a fire-break in case of flying sparks from incoming rounds. Fire fighters

probably could not have reached the scene of a forest fire in time to prevent an outbreak.

Battling the summer heat, the troops packed their rucks and donned their helmets, an ensemble that weighs close to 100 pounds.

Given the conditions, the changes and the new mission, questions and concerns flew about the TOC. The conversations may have sounded like intense confusion, but rapid exchange of information always is critical in conducting a mission safely and on time.

Lt. Col. Todd Nehls, the battalion commander, addressed his staff: “It seems that every year before we start an exercise, it doesn’t look like (the deployment) is going to work out.

Somehow, we manage to pull it out. I don’t know how it happens, but every time we get the troops out and the exercise is a success.”

As the time for deployment neared, the sun shone and the temperature dropped into the low 70s. Soldiers started arriving at the helipad for their air-insertion mission.

The airlift, as Nehls predicted, went off without a hitch.

“I was pretty happy with the deployment,” said Maj. Tim Lawson, the battalion’s executive officer. “We don’t get together as a battalion too often. Many times, we’ll come as separate companies to Fort McCoy to train. Despite that fact, everybody pulled together well and got the job done.”



Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, secure an LZ (landing zone) at Fort McCoy, as a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter descends to pick them up.



A squad of 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, moves along a street at Fort McCoy during annual training.





at ease

Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Charneski, a tanker with Company D, 1st Battalion, 632nd Armor, Wausau, takes time away from his M-1 to run through the light infantry conditioning course at Fort McCoy, Wis. Charneski is a military technician at Organizational Maintenance Shop 13 in Wausau. See “Tankers go afoot” on page 9. Photo by Jim Wagner.

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